

Submission to the
Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

**Inquiry into
racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

Submitted by:

ACT Multicultural Council (ACTMC)

Andrew Ng, Chair

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ACTMC requests that this submission be published in full.

1. Introduction

The ACT Multicultural Council (ACTMC) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry. As the peak body representing more than 100 ethnic community organisations in the Australian Capital Territory, ACTMC advocates for multicultural communities and promotes harmony, inclusion, and anti-racism across all groups in our society.

While our primary focus is supporting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, we recognise that racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is foundational to many forms of discrimination in Australia. Multicultural communities often witness, experience intersections with, or actively stand in solidarity against such racism. This submission draws on feedback from our member organisations and events to highlight observed patterns, impacts, and potential solutions.

2. Nature, Prevalence, and Impact of Racism, Hate, and Violence (TOR 1)

Racism directed at First Nations peoples remains prevalent in Canberra and the broader ACT region, manifesting in everyday interactions, institutional settings, and public discourse. From ACTMC's perspective:

- Multicultural community members report overhearing or encountering casual racism (e.g., stereotypes about Indigenous Australians in workplaces, schools, or social settings) that normalises prejudice.
 - There are intersections where CALD individuals face racism themselves while also observing anti-Indigenous sentiment, sometimes compounded in shared spaces (e.g., public transport, community events).
 - Recent national events, including online hate spikes following incidents like the Perth alleged terror attack (January 2026) or Camp Sovereignty events, have heightened tensions and fear within both First Nations and multicultural communities.
- The cumulative impact includes eroded trust, mental health burdens, and barriers to participation in multicultural harmony initiatives.

3. Role of Online Platforms (TOR 2)

Online platforms significantly amplify racist content targeting First Nations people. ACTMC members have noted:

- Rapid spread of harmful stereotypes, memes, and misinformation on social media that vilify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals/communities.
- This reaches multicultural audiences, sometimes fostering division or imported prejudices from other contexts.
- Younger members of CALD communities are particularly exposed, highlighting the need for digital literacy programs that address anti-Indigenous racism alongside other forms.

4. Effective Initiatives and Recommendations (TOR 3)

ACTMC supports and participates in anti-racism efforts and offers the following observations/recommendations:

- Community-led education and dialogue: Programs like multicultural festivals (e.g., Harmony Week events in Canberra) that include First Nations voices have proven effective in building understanding and reducing prejudice. Expand these to include joint CALD–First Nations workshops.
- Intersectional approaches: Policies should recognise overlapping experiences of racism (e.g., for Indigenous people from migrant backgrounds or CALD individuals in regional areas).
- Online regulation and education: Strengthen platform accountability for removing hate speech quickly, combined with school/community programs on media literacy and respectful online behaviour.
- Institutional reforms: Greater representation of First Nations perspectives in multicultural policy development, and funding for joint anti-racism campaigns.
- Solidarity building: Encourage more formal alliances between multicultural peak bodies like ACTMC and First Nations organisations to co-design responses and amplify shared calls for change.

5. Conclusion

ACTMC stands in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in calling for urgent, meaningful action to address racism, hate, and violence. Eliminating these harms benefits all Australians and strengthens our multicultural society. We are available to provide further information or participate in hearings if required.

Thank you for considering this submission.



Andrew Ng, Chair, ACTMC